

CHAPTER 5

LIGHT ARMOR COMPANY

The light armor company is subordinate to the light armor battalion, but it has the flexibility to task organize to a light infantry brigade. When the company is employed with its parent battalion, its basic employment is similar to that of the tank company as described in FM 71-1. This chapter describes employment of the light armor company when it operates with a light infantry brigade.

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Section I. Organization

LIGHT ARMOR COMPANY

The light armor company's combat vehicles consist of 14 M8s. The company is organized into three platoons of four M8s each and a company headquarters consisting of two M8s. See Figure 5-1 for a diagram of company organization.

The task organization of a light armor company to a light infantry brigade is the norm. The brigade commander has the option to employ the light armor company as a separate combat element, or further task organize light armor platoons to infantry battalions.

This subsection will cover the employment of the light armor company as a company or team operating with its parent light armor battalion or task organized to the light infantry brigade as a single combat element. The light armor company can be organized as follows:

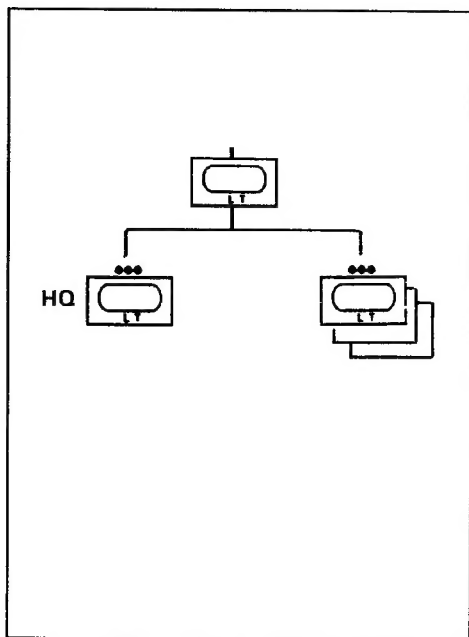


Figure 5-1. The light armor company.

- As a company or team under OPCON to a light infantry battalion,
 - or under brigade control,
 - or under light armor battalion control.
- Partially task organized (one or two platoons) to battalions with the company headquarters and remaining platoon(s) retained at brigade control or task organized to a battalion.
- Providing platoons to each of the three light infantry battalions. The company commander may go to the battalion with the most critical mission. He can receive attachment of infantry and/or TOW platoons along with the light armor platoon to form a team organization.

THE LIGHT BRIGADE

The tables of organization and equipment (TOE) of the brigade headquarters varies by type of light force. While all brigade headquarters serve to provide C2 and supervision of tactical operations, different brigade organizations have varying degrees of capabilities and limitations. The structure and capabilities of the parent light division also affect the integration of a light armor company into a light infantry brigade. The light armor company commander attached to a light infantry brigade must understand what the brigade is capable of in terms of service and support. Consider the following points regarding different types of brigades:

- **Light infantry brigades.** Light infantry brigades are the most austere headquarters in terms of communications ability and number of staff officers. There is no assistant S3-Air or LO and there are fewer vehicles in the main CP. All organizational maintenance is centralized at the brigade maintenance section. All Class I is prepared by the brigade mess team. The LID and brigade depend on corps transportation. One notable characteristic of light infantry is the limited antiarmor capability of the brigade; there are 12 TOWs and 54 Dragons per brigade.
- **Airborne brigades.** Once opposed entry operations are complete, airborne brigades operate as light infantry, but with a greater capacity in terms of CS and CSS than a light infantry brigade. There are 60 TOWs and 54 Dragons per airborne brigade. However, the airborne division has only one attack helicopter battalion, as does the light division.
- **Air assault brigades.** Air assault brigades most closely mirror armor and mechanized brigades in terms of staff composition and the robustness of the CSS system. Although the number and distribution of high-power radios are the same as in the light infantry brigade, the air assault brigade frequently uses its attached helicopters as one means of extending its C2 capabilities. These brigades have habitual relationships and attachment with an assault helicopter battalion, which provides lift for the brigade. Air assault units are not tied to secure ground lines of communication for logistics as are other units. Antiarmor capabilities are the same as in the airborne brigade. In addition, the air assault division has a combat aviation brigade consisting of two attack helicopter battalions, giving it a greater divisional antitank capability.

AUGMENTATION

The CSS capability of both light armor and light infantry forces begins to degrade after one to three days. Light infantry units have difficulty operating with light armor units because the logistics support structure of light infantry is generally austere. Light armor forces operating with light infantry forces for more than three days require more detailed CSS planning and augmentation at all levels.

Attachment requires the light infantry brigade to operate with the light armor company. To do this, the light infantry brigade must receive attachments of light armor battalion CSS assets or support from the LID or corps. These should include Classes III and V, transportation assets, and light armor maintenance assets.

Normally, the light armor company will come with CS and CSS assets. Much of this support can be standardized with the final determination based on the tactical situation.

Augmentation Support

Possible Augmentation:

FIST
 Engineer platoon
 MEDEVAC team (HMMWV)
 Maintenance team (see [Chapter 8](#))
 Ammo section (two 5-ton trucks
 as a minimum)
 Fuel section (two 5-ton trucks)
 DS maintenance contact team
 automotive, armament, commo
 mechanics with limited ASL

Provided by:

Bale's DS Arty Bn or DIVARTY
 Corps or division engineer
 Light armor battalion
 Light armor battalion
 Light armor battalion
 Light armor battalion
 DS maintenance battalion

Integrity of the light armor company may be maintained to achieve mass, to facilitate C2, and to provide CSS. In some situations, however, it will be necessary to attach light armor platoons to light battalions. It will be prudent under most circumstances to maintain a light armor reserve at brigade level.

Section II. Employment

The light infantry brigade commander will establish the role and position of the light armor company based on the factors of METT-T and the current situation. The use of the light armor company can vary based on the commander's estimate of the situation. The light armor company may be employed as a maneuver, overwatch fire, or reserve force.

As a maneuver element, the company team is normally given the mission of seizing an objective. The objective may be undefended or occupied by an enemy force. The light armor company should lead the attack against automatic weapons, antipersonnel mines, wire entanglements, and enemy light armor or motorized forces. Light armor and infantry can move together in the assault against entrenched infantry, jungle positions, heavily fortified areas, towns and villages, and during periods of low visibility.

The light armor company (or portions of the company) can provide overwatch or direct fires for the light infantry maneuver or assault. The brigade or battalion (if task organized to battalion level) gives the company a support by fire or overwatch position for this mission. The company observes the enemy and provides information to the maneuver element. It places destructive or suppressive fires on known and suspected enemy positions, adjusts indirect fires to support the maneuver force, protects the maneuver force against counterattacks, and provides other assistance. Light armor overmatches and supports by fire while light infantry assaults—

- Against constructed antitank defenses such as ditches, abatises, and minefield.
- Through heavy woods.
- Within cities, villages, and towns.
- In mountainous terrain.
- When the terrain is extremely restrictive along the approach axis to the objective.
- When fields of fire and observation are adequate for long-range main gun and machine gun fires.
- When enemy tanks on the objective must be suppressed and the only armor approach is frontal.

The company may be designated as the brigade reserve and move in depth of the brigade formation. Its general location and possible missions are normally specified by the commander based on METT-T. The commitment of this reserve is the most critical decision of the brigade commander. The reserve may be assigned one or more of the following missions or tasks:

- Assume the mission of the attacking unit.
- Attack from a different direction.
- Support the attacking unit by fire.
- Provide flank security against an armored threat or on armor avenues of approach.
- Protect or assist during consolidation on the objective.
- Protect key intersections and bridges.
- Block a counterattack.

MISSIONS

Missions and tasks that the light infantry and light armor company may execute when operating with a brigade are listed in the following chart.

Missions and Tasks	
Light Infantry Brigade	Light Armor Company
Movement to Contact	Overwatch enemy avenues of approach; attack by fire; provide mutual supporting fire; provide direct-fire suppression on prepared positions; overwatch/assist in reducing obstacles; serve as guard, reserve, or counterattack force.
Hasty Attack	Attack by fire; conduct an assault breach; serve as reserve; conduct exploitation.
Deliberate Attack	Isolate the objective; attack by fire; provide direct fire; deceive the enemy concerning the main effort; overwatch counterattack routes; serve as reserve; conduct exploitation.
Exploitation	Lead the exploitation; overwatch; serve as reserve or security force.
Pursuit	Lead the direct-pressure force; overwatch; serve as reserve, enveloping, or security force.
Follow and Support	Provide direct FS; reduce obstacles; clear bypassed forces; secure key terrain and LOCs; provide rear area security.
Cover	Overwatch; screen; and guard.

Missions and Tasks (Cont)	
Light Infantry Brigade	Light Armor Company
Defend in Sector	Defend a BP; cover obstacles with long-range fires; serve as security or reserve force; deceive enemy about main defense.
Breakout from Encirclement	Serve as rupture force or rear guard.
Linkup	Serve as contact element or security, overwatch, or reserve force.
Delay	Overwatch; counterattack by fire; conduct deception; reinforce; serve as reserve, or counterattack force.
Withdrawal	Serve as DLIC, rear guard, reserve, or covering force; overwatch; fix enemy attack; conduct deception; occupy positions in depth.
Retirement	Serve as security force.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Intelligence. The light infantry brigade may use the mobility and thermal sight capability of the light armor company to conduct reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S). The light armor force may also participate in security operations. Light infantry brigade R&S plans should incorporate these capabilities.

The light infantry S2 may not be aware of the IPB needs of the light armor platoon: number, armor protection level, and armor-piercing capability of enemy forces; presence of antitank jamming emitters; and terrain analysis for mobility corridors. The potential NBC threat targets are identified by the battalion chemical officer. The light armor platoon leader should request these as priority intelligence requirements (PIR) and ask the S2 to work on them.

Maneuver. The following considerations apply during planning:

- Light armor companies will generally fight at night since light infantry is employed at night whenever possible. Night operations increase light infantry survivability and enhance the use of stealth to gain the advantage over the enemy.
- Light infantry is best employed in close, restrictive terrain during both offensive and defensive operations. In this case, the light armor company assists the operations of the light infantry brigade. In restrictive terrain, the light armor company will be vulnerable to enemy infantry and will be dependent on light infantry for security. The company will normally be task organized by platoons in restrictive terrain.
- In more open terrain, light infantry will be vulnerable to enemy armor forces and will become more dependent on the light armor company for protection. The company will more likely be kept intact when in open terrain.
- Light armor should be careful not to leave the light infantry behind when leading attacks. Both forces will then lose the mutual support they need. Infantry may be carried on top of M8s or intacts (if available), but only before enemy contact. The survivability of infantry riding on such vehicles is at great risk if enemy contact is made while infantry is still mounted. M8s may assault enemy positions. They should not go so far that the enemy is able to recover and take countermeasures before friendly infantry arrives.

- The light infantry normally conducts an area defense to hold ground. The light infantry brigade may desire to employ light armor elements forward to assist light units in their defense. The brigade, however, should also employ a light armor reserve. This mobile reserve will be able to respond quickly to any portion of the brigade AO to eliminate enemy penetrations.
- The light armor company possesses weapons of greater range and destructive power than light infantry. Light armor weapons assist light infantry in accomplishing missions by suppressing or destroying enemy infantry and armor. This can be done from ranges that exceed the ranges of light infantry weapons. One caution is that the firing of M8 main gun APFSDS and M2 armor-piercing ammunition is dangerous to friendly infantry forward of those weapons. The ammunition contains discarding petals that could strike anyone within 1,000 meters forward and 70 meters left or right of the gun target line. The light armor company commander tracks the NBC hazards to reduce his vulnerability and risk level. Smoke is used to enhance the maneuver of the light armor company and prevent enemy observation.

Fire Support. Light armor forces are supported with essentially the same FS structure provided to an armor company. The FIST provides access to tactical fire direction systems (TACFIRE), light tactical fire direction systems (LTACFIRE), and follow-on digital fire support communications planning and coordination systems. The FIST also has the capability to accomplish all fire support functions using voice or manual means.

If a FIST is not available, the company commander must be prepared to integrate FS into operations. The battalion FSO/FSE will assist him in this action.

Consideration must be given to positioning the company FIST. Although the FIST is not equipped with an armored vehicle, they must be positioned where they can best maintain communications and control FS in support of the company.

All FS assets available to the force are also available to the light armor company, ranging from organic mortars and divisional field artillery in DS, to air support and NGF. Planning for and use of FS will multiply the combat power of the light armor company.

Consideration must be given to the type of forces that will follow combat by light armor forces. Submunitions from various FS assets may have residual lethality particularly for light infantry forces.

Mobility and Survivability. Light division engineers are not capable of supporting light armor units. In order of desirability, the light armor company should be tasked organized with a platoon of corps mechanized engineers, corps wheeled engineers, corps airborne engineers, or corps light engineers. The light infantry brigade has a limited capability to carry barrier materials to areas where they need to be employed. However, the rapid emplacement capability of FASCAM and Volcano can quickly shape the battlefield and slow the enemy's advance. Commanders must be aware of and deconflict the counterattack maneuver plan and the countermobility plan to ensure clear routes for the M8s. In addition to engineer operations, the light armor company commander must integrate NBC operations into his mission analysis. NBC defense measures, smoke operations, and reconnaissance operations are a vital part of a unit's ability to move and survive.

Air Defense. Air defense for light armor companies should be kept mobile. It must also have access to the air defense early warning net, control net, and missile resupply. This can be accomplished if the light armor company's air defense slice includes Avengers. If Stinger teams are provided, it will be difficult to put the gunner under armor. Stinger HMMWVs may be used to monitor the early warning and control nets since it will normally be employed forward. If this is not possible, the company should provide a dedicated radio so air defense personnel can monitor the early warning net.

Combat Service Support. Light forces conduct CSS more frequently than light armor forces, but require less materiel. The light armor company must coordinate closely with the light infantry brigade to establish procedures for CSS. Procedures include the timing of support, amounts normally needed, and types of supplies needed. Much of the light armor unit's ammunition will not be familiar to the light infantry. Special arrangements may have to be made so that spare parts for the light armor company are requested and received in a timely manner.

The light armor battalion can augment the light infantry unit's CSS assets with an appropriate slice of support vehicles and personnel to bolster the light unit's ability to properly support the light armor company. Chapter 8 discusses this augmentation in more detail.

The company supply sergeant should keep the company's field trains in the light infantry brigade's forward area support team (FAST). He should learn the locations of all supply points such as food, fuel, and ammunition. It may be necessary to coordinate with the brigade either to go to higher unit supply points to receive supplies or to receive throughput supplies from higher units. The light armor company should be prepared to assist in the resupply of light infantry units during more mobile situations.

Command and Control. Providing continuous liaison between the light armor company and the light infantry brigade headquarters will enhance C2. During planning and preparation, the company commander can perform this function. He is experienced in dealing with a staff and is capable of advising the commander on the employment of his company.

During operations, the light armor company normally does not have the capability to provide liaison personnel. The importance of liaison in a light infantry/light armor situation, however, will require that liaison be made. In certain locations in the light infantry brigade, radios may not have the range to communicate with the company continuously. The light armor company commander may provide the company XO with his M8s to conduct liaison with the light infantry brigade during the conduct of operations. This will serve two purposes. It will provide continuous communications and liaison between the light armor company and the light infantry brigade. It will also provide security to the light infantry brigade CP when there is a limited enemy armor threat. The light armor battalion may also deploy an S3 representative or scout platoon NCO as a liaison to avoid using a company member.

The light armor company and light infantry brigade should develop and use SOPs. The company will use the light infantry brigade's report formats. Common hand-and-arm signals must be determined for light armor and infantry units to understand each other (see Chapter 4). The company will have to learn the light brigade's procedures for conducting CSS. The brigade must determine how to meet the CSS needs of the light armor company.

The light armor company and light infantry brigade should review operational terms to ensure mutual understanding. The light armor company commander should be included in all command group meetings and in all rehearsals. These activities will provide opportunities to clear up misunderstandings, ensure the best employment of combat power, improve synchronization of operations, and reduce fratricide.

Section III. Command, Control, and Communications

COMPANY COMMAND AND CONTROL

The commander must be careful to select the position that allows him to be at the most critical place on the battlefield. He must use terrain and weather to conceal movements from the enemy, but he must maintain visual or radio contact with his platoons.

The company commander must synchronize actions with the other company commanders. He must quickly inform the TF commander when anything critical happens. If contact with

the TF is lost, the commander makes every attempt, without abandoning the mission, to reestablish communications. The commander continues to take actions that accomplish the commander's intent until communications are restored.

The company XO can help by monitoring the TF frequency and making reports to the TF on the tactical situation. When direct contact with one or more platoons is not possible, the XO may position where he can control those elements.

The company commander ensures that the platoon leaders maintain contact with him and keep him informed of their situation. He should encourage the platoon leaders to talk to each other and coordinate their actions. Cross-talking between the platoons on the company command net should be encouraged.

The company commander should issue clear orders. He must state the mission, intent, and any other instructions that affect movement and fire control so that they are understood. WOs must be issued early to give leaders time to react to all possible upcoming missions. Keep subordinates informed on the enemy situation and what other units in the TF are doing.

COMMUNICATIONS

The quality of communications in the company is dependent on the individual skills of the soldiers, the equipment and the desires of the commander. Several means of communication are available. Each should complement the others so that the company does not rely on only one means. Dependence on one means of communication, such as the radio, endangers C2. Figure 5-2 shows the company communication network. The five basic means of communication are used as follows:

- Wire should be used as the primary means of communication for OPs, BPs, strong-points, combat trains, and assembly areas.
- Messengers can be dispatched when the unit occupies an assembly area or BP or reorganizes on an objective. Messengers can rehearse routes in daylight (if possible) prior to changes in visibility and carry handwritten notes to increase accuracy.
- Visual signals are used from the SOI or unit SOP. See [Chapter 4](#) for standard hand-and-arm signals. Other visual signals include lights and flags.
- Sound signals can be used from the SOI or unit SOP. Sound signals can include pyrotechnics, metal on metal, whistles, bells, or rifle shots.

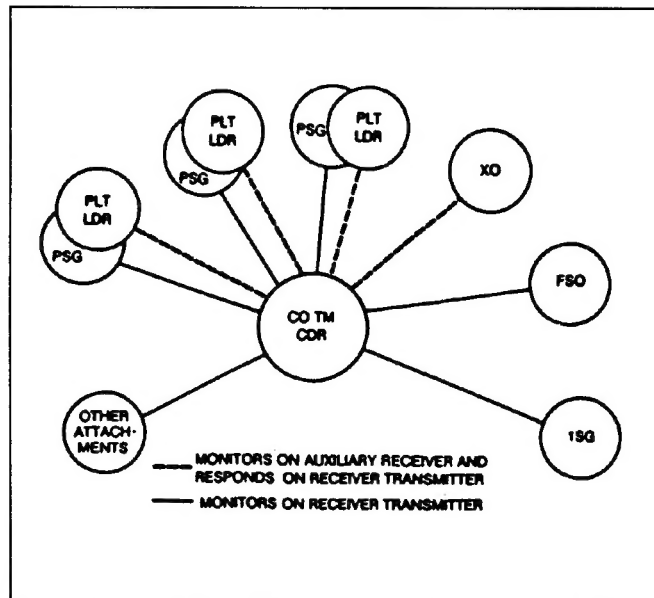


Figure 5-2. Company communication network.

- Radio is the primary means of communication when enemy contact is made. The company commander operates the company command net and monitors the TF net. The company XO operates on the TF command net and monitors the company net. If the company is task organized under brigade control, the company commander may be required to operate on the brigade command net. If this is the case, the XO can assist by operating the company net and monitoring the TF net. The 1SG operates on the TF administrative/logistics (A/L) net and monitors the company net. Platoon leaders operate on their nets and monitor the company net.

FORMATIONS

The company commander uses formations to control movement. SOPs should standardize the company's use of reporting procedures, formations, movement, and C2 techniques. Basic battle drills and formations can be found in [Chapter 4](#). The company has five basic formations: combat column, wedge, vee, line, and echelon. When designating the company formation, the company commander—

- Establishes the relationship of one platoon to another on the ground.
- Expresses where he envisions the enemy to be and how he intends to react to contact.
- Establishes where firepower is needed.
- Establishes how (mounted or dismounted) and where light infantry travels in relation to the vehicles.
- Establishes the degree of security desired.

A combat formation is not rigid. Terrain and common sense will frequently dictate needed changes. Unless directed, it is not necessary for the company to use the same formation as the infantry brigade or battalion.

Column (see [Figure 5-3](#)). this formation is used when speed is critical and the possibility of enemy contact is not likely. Light infantrymen are usually mounted on M8s or trucks (if available). A modified version, the combat column, can be used if the terrain allows for dispersion. The combat column can be used when contact is likely and speed is important. Infantryman, if M8-mounted, should not travel on the lead platoons vehicles.

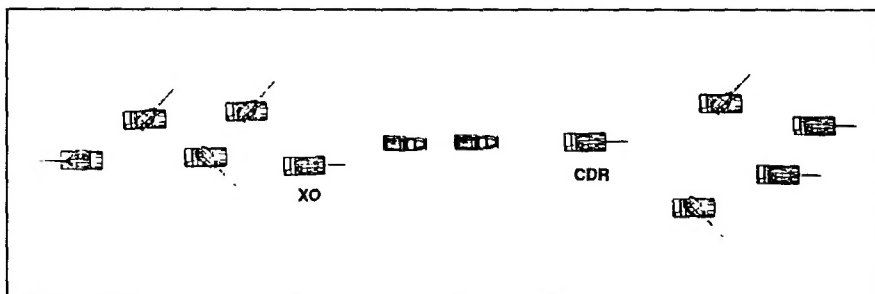


Figure 5-3. Combat column formation.

Wedge (see [Figure 5-4](#)). The wedge is used when the situation is vague and contact with the enemy is imminent. This formation can be used to move in relatively open terrain to provide some protection to dismounted light infantrymen. See [Figure 5-5](#) for an example of a modified wedge formation.

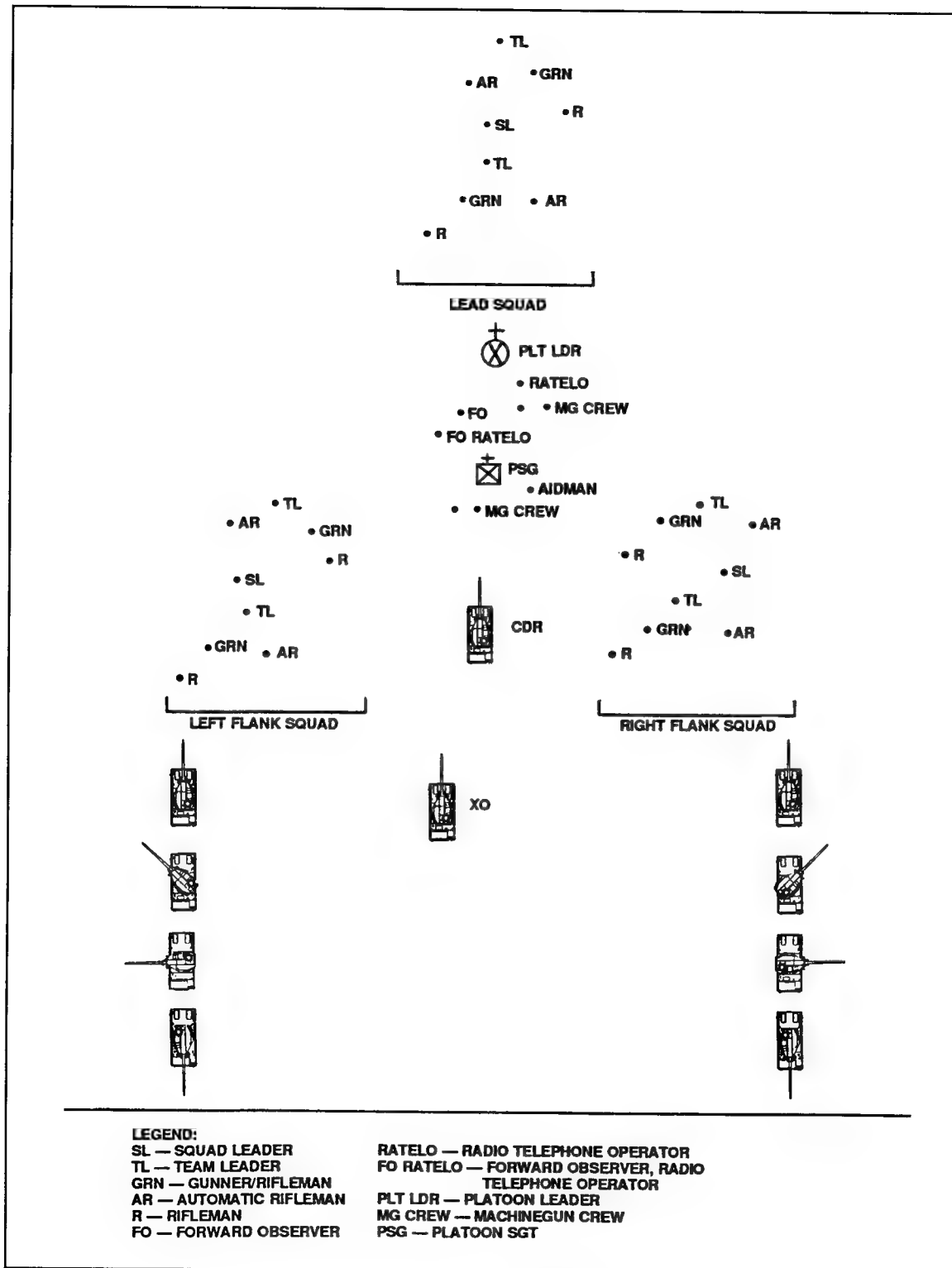


Figure 5-4. Wedge formation.

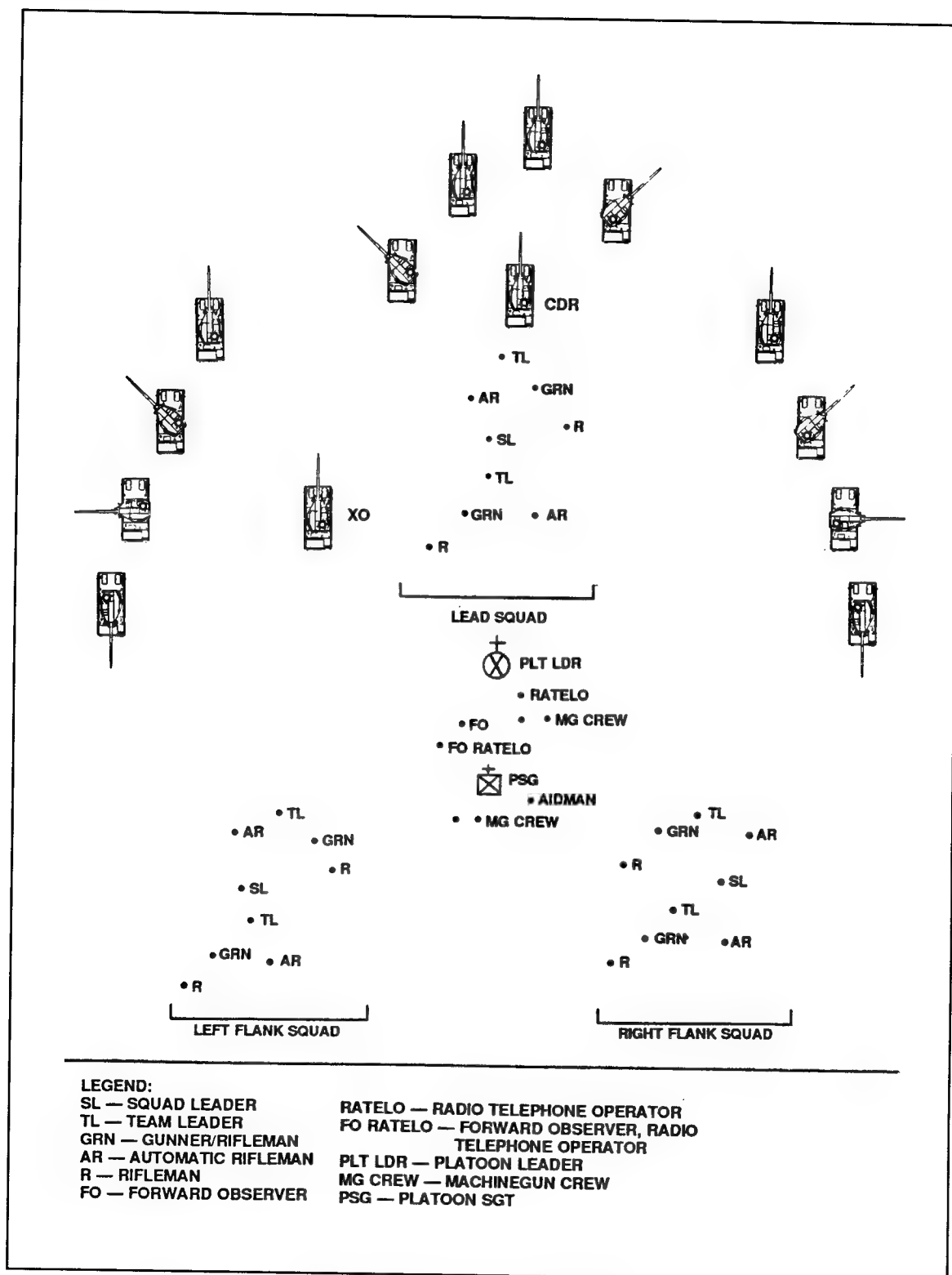


Figure 5-5. Modified wedge formation.

Vee (see Figure 5-6). This formation is used when probability of enemy contact is high. It provides maximum firepower up front while leaving a platoon in depth to maneuver. This is a difficult formation to use when task organized as a team of two light armor platoons and one infantry platoon.

Line (see Figure 5-7). This formation is normally used, if terrain permits, when assaulting an objective. It can also be used to emerge from smoke or woodlines. In this case, platoons should use overwatch or support by fire techniques to cover each other. Light infantry cannot move forward of the M8s when assaulting due to the danger of discarding-sabot ammunition.

Echelon. The echelon is used when one flank faces a significant threat. Usually only used when M8 pure. It is extremely difficult to use with dismounted infantry if there is contact to the opposite side of the echelon. If that happens, the M8s will not be able to conduct action drills without endangering infantrymen.

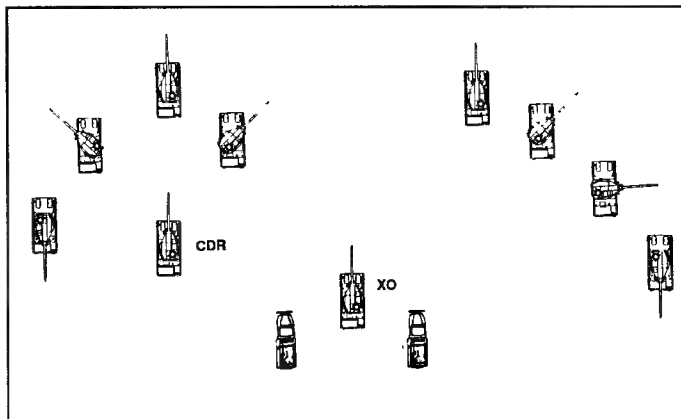


Figure 5-6. Vee formation (infantry truck mounted).

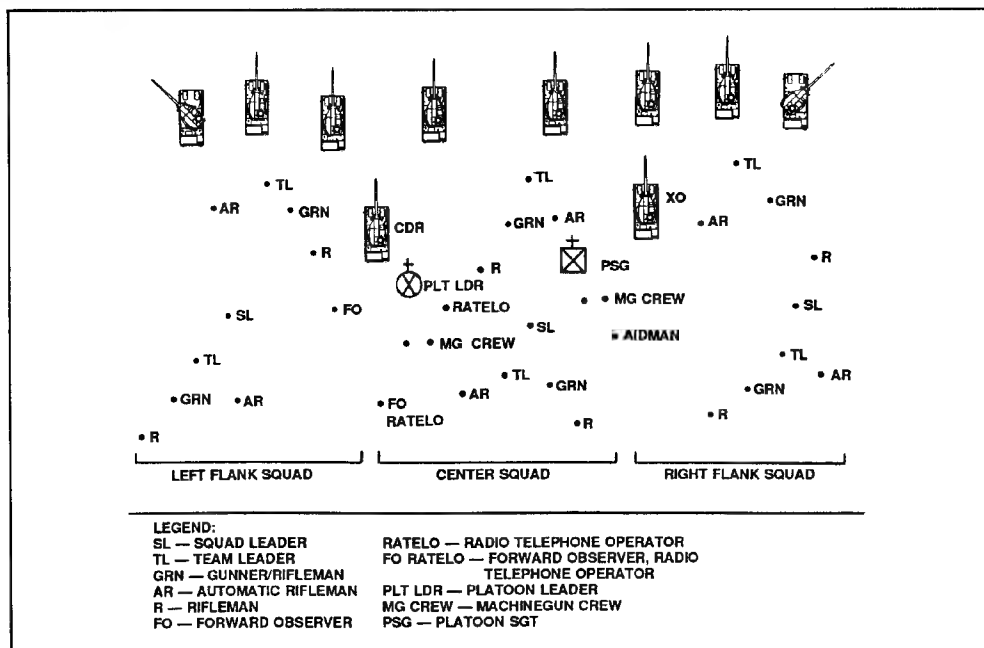


Figure 5-7. Line formation.

Section IV. Offensive Operations

When operating with the light infantry brigade, the light armor company can be employed in one of four methods:

- As part of the main attack.
- As a reserve or follow-on in support of the main attack.
- As reconnaissance and security forces forward, on the flanks, and to the rear of the main and supporting attacks.
- As part of the supporting attack.

The light armor company participates in two types of offensive missions—movement to contact and attack (hasty and deliberate). The company may participate in an exploitation or pursuit. It will normally participate in these missions as part of a larger infantry force (brigade), but on some occasions it may operate as part of a light armor TF.

MOVEMENT TECHNIQUES

Tactical movement techniques are used in conjunction with formations. See [Chapter 4](#) for more information about movement techniques.

Forms of Maneuver. The light infantry brigade uses the same basic forms of maneuver as the light infantry battalion described in [Chapter 4](#). For further information on the light infantry brigade, see FM 7-30.

Avoiding Enemy Antiarmor Fire. When the terrain allows the light armor company to maneuver in mass, it presents an easily identifiable target and is vulnerable to enemy antiarmor and tank fires. The company should use all available cover and concealment; the enemy cannot mass fires against the company if it cannot see it. Despite its obvious advantage, however, moving along covered and concealed routes costs the company in terms of speed, control, and vulnerability to short-range, handheld antiarmor weapons. Smoke is used to defeat enemy observation and target acquisition.

M8s must never skyline or move directly forward from a defilade position. Avoid dusty terrain when possible; it betrays the movement of armored vehicles. Before crossing open areas, use attached infantry or dismount personnel with binoculars to observe the area carefully for possible enemy positions prior to emerging from cover. If enemy locations are identified or suspected, suppress them or use smoke on them before crossing.

Cross open areas as quickly as possible. Use rapid rushes from one covered position to another. If an M8 is exposed for less than 30 seconds, it will be extremely difficult for an enemy ATGM gunner to acquire, fire, track, and hit it at long range. Use 15- to 20-second rushes when suspected ATGM positions are close.

In situations where use of covered routes is too time-consuming, plan for escape routes (see [Figure 5-8](#)).

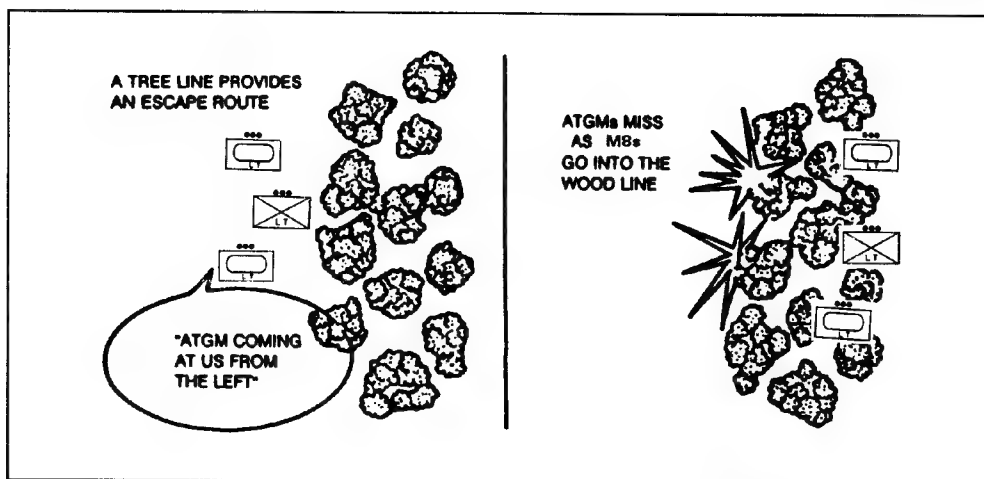


Figure 5-8. Company movement with escape routes.

MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

A movement to contact is an offensive operation designed to gain contact with the enemy. A company can expect to task organize one or two of its platoons to infantry battalions during a movement to contact. The remaining platoon(s) will be retained under the company headquarters with infantry attached as the brigade reserve. The company commander will designate specific movement techniques and formations to reduce danger to the unit while moving. Once contact is made, the company uses fire and movement to develop the situation. In the absence of command guidance, the company commander employs the factors of METT-T to specify movement techniques and formations.

The brigade will conduct a movement to contact in two general situations. The most common situation has the brigade operating independently and attacking with one or two lead battalions (see Figure 5-9). The other situation is when the entire division is out of contact, with a great distance between friendly and enemy AOs. The brigade either moves as the main divisional body or provides units for security, guard, or security forces (see Figure 5-10). The brigade commander assesses the situation once contact is made and decides to attack, bypass, or defend based on how the situation develops.

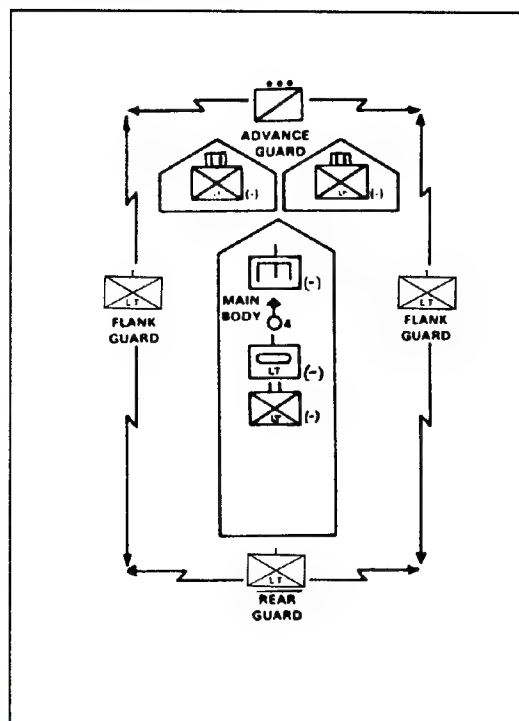


Figure 5-9. Example of a light armor company with light infantry brigade MTC: light armor company as part of a brigade vee.

In the examples illustrated in [Figures 5-9](#) and 5-10, the light armor company has detached platoons to the lead battalion(s) and retained the remaining platoons under company control as the brigade reserve. This gives the lead battalions a small, mobile, self-contained force to locate and fix the enemy. The example in Figure 5-10 shows the light armor company retained as a unit for ease of movement. The lead battalion receives an attachment of a light armor platoon while the light armor company(-) moves with a TOW platoon as a reserve. This may be done if there is a potential enemy mechanized threat. In some cases, the light armor company can be used as forward or flank security for movement.

The example in Figure 5-11 shows the cloverleaf technique when the light armor company is given a large designated area to search rapidly.

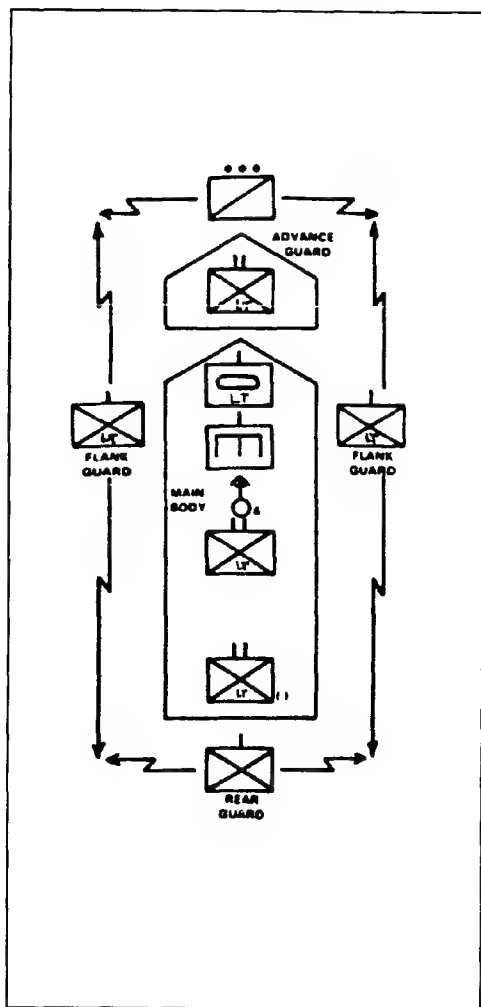


Figure 5-10. Example of a light armor company with light infantry brigade MTC: light armor company as part of a brigade column.

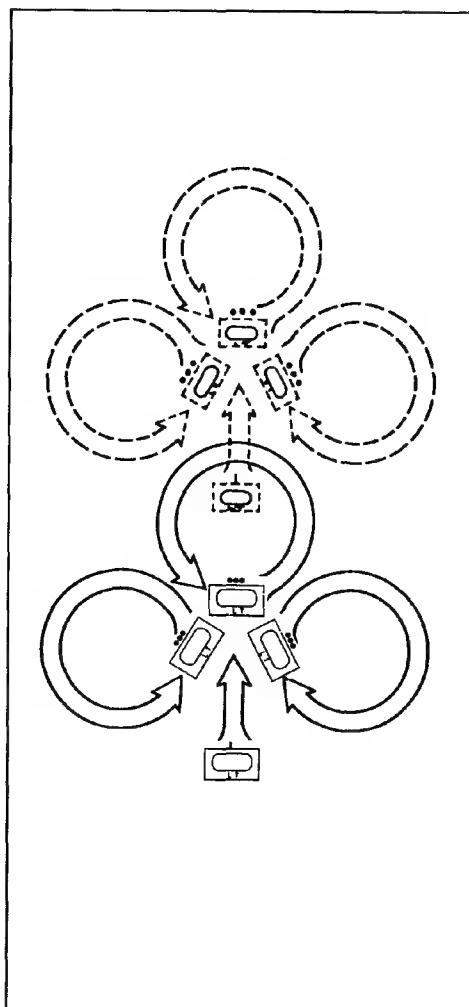


Figure 5-11. Example of cloverleaf technique.

HASTY ATTACK

The hasty attack is used to exploit an opportunity to gain or maintain the initiative at company or higher level. It is characterized by quick planning and coordination. A hasty attack can develop when—

- A movement to contact results in contact.
- A deliberate attack is changed after it is under way.
- Further advance is ordered after securing an objective.
- A counterattack is ordered in the defense.

An MTC may terminate in a hasty attack, during which the company may be assigned the mission of securing a terrain feature or destroying an enemy force. If enemy contact is made en route to securing an objective, the unit may—

- Fix and bypass the enemy, depending on enemy strength and the unit's orders.
- Attack by fire to destroy the enemy.
- Conduct a hasty attack to kill the enemy and continue the attack to the objective.

Depending on his orders and the size and location of the enemy, the infantry TF commander develops a plan to conduct a hasty attack when enemy contact is made. He designates an objective, a support by fire element, the support by fire element's overwatch positions, an assault element, and covered and concealed routes into the flanks of the enemy. He then issues a fragmentary order to his company commanders.

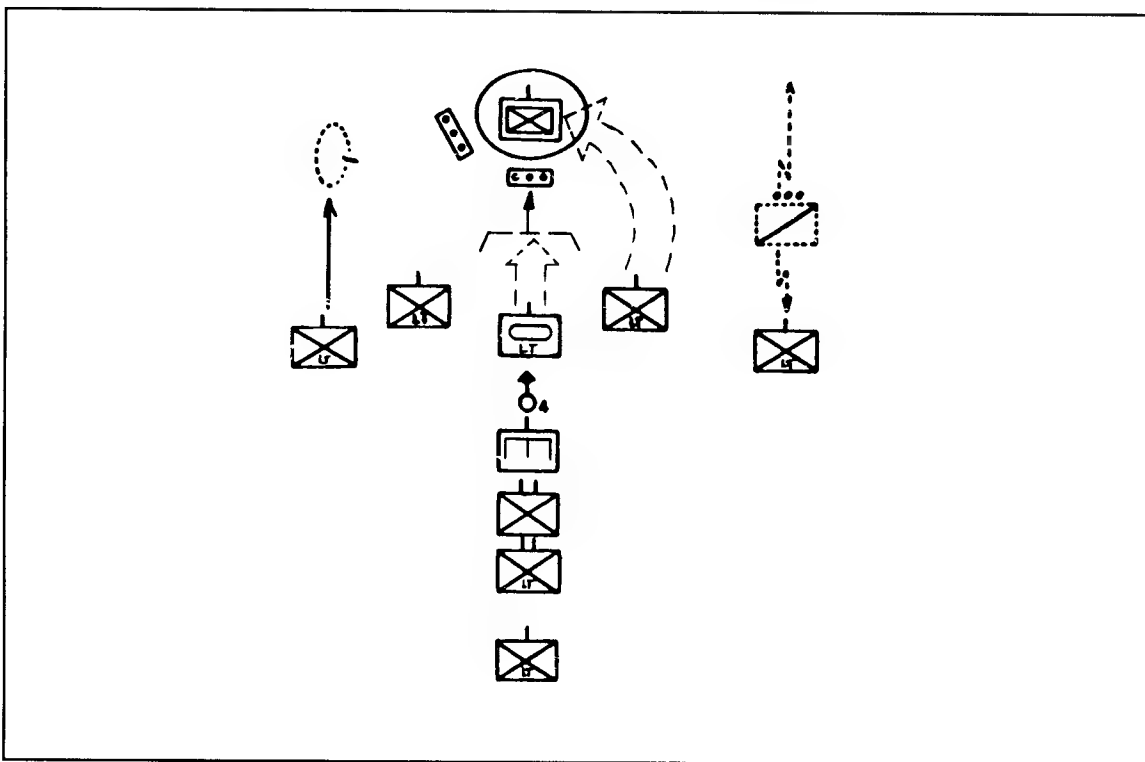


Figure 5-12. Light brigade/light armor company hasty attack, example 1.

The first infantry TF to make contact with the enemy conducts actions on contact, develops the situation, destroys the enemy if possible, and reports the situation to the brigade. The brigade commander may employ the light armor company as an assault force. Figures 5-12 through 5-14 show examples of light infantry brigade hasty attacks with a light armor company.

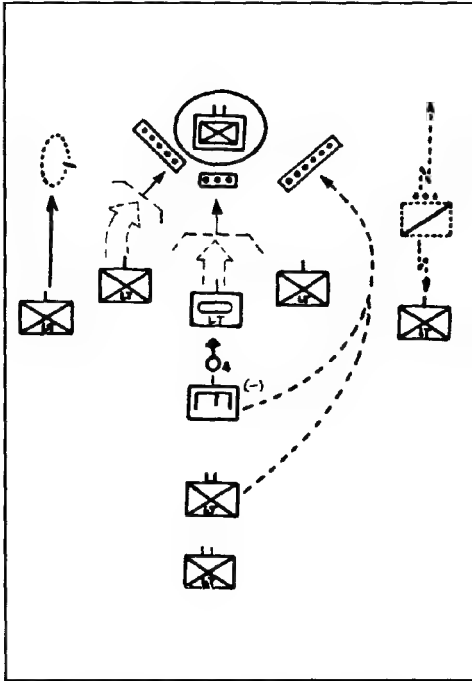


Figure 5-13. Light brigade/light armor company hasty attack, example 2.

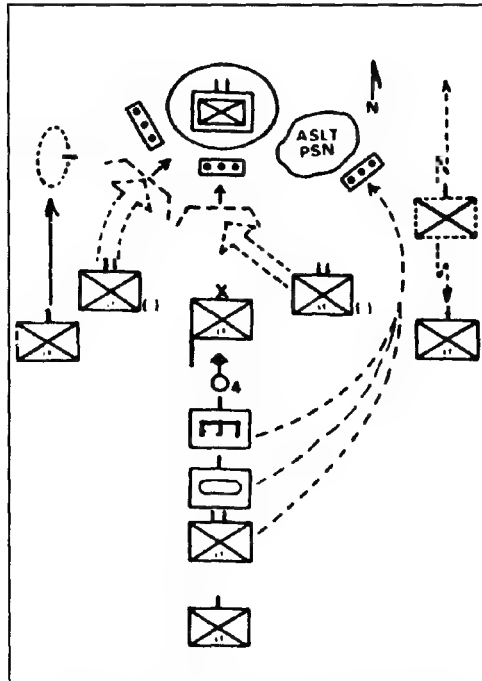


Figure 5-14. Light brigade/light armor company hasty attack, example 3.

DELIBERATE ATTACK

A deliberate attack is usually necessary against a well-organized, well-prepared enemy that cannot be turned nor bypassed. The infantry commander will normally have time to collect detailed information about the enemy. The brigade commander may consider using the light armor company to assist in one or more of the following:

- Isolating the penetration or objective area with direct fire to prevent enemy reinforcement or supporting fires.
- Committing a strong force to overwhelm the enemy at an identified or created weak point.
- Striking the enemy on the flanks or in the rear.
- Using a form of maneuver that avoids the enemy's main strength.
- Fixing other positions to minimize the enemy's capability to react.
- Developing a deception plan.

Figures 5-15 and 5-16 show examples of a light infantry brigade deliberate attack with a light armor company.

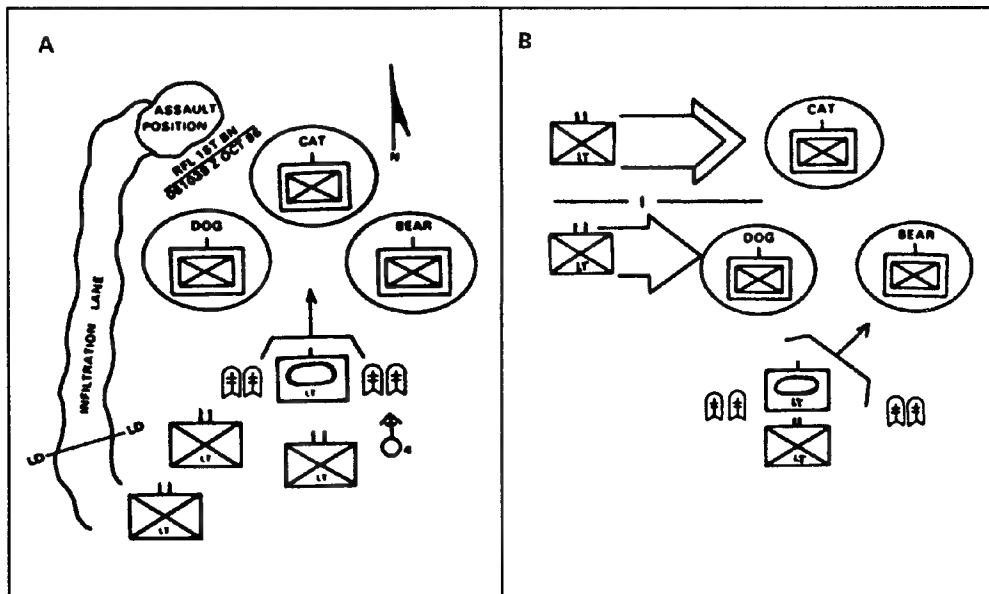


Figure 5-15. Light brigade/light armor company deliberate attack, example 1.

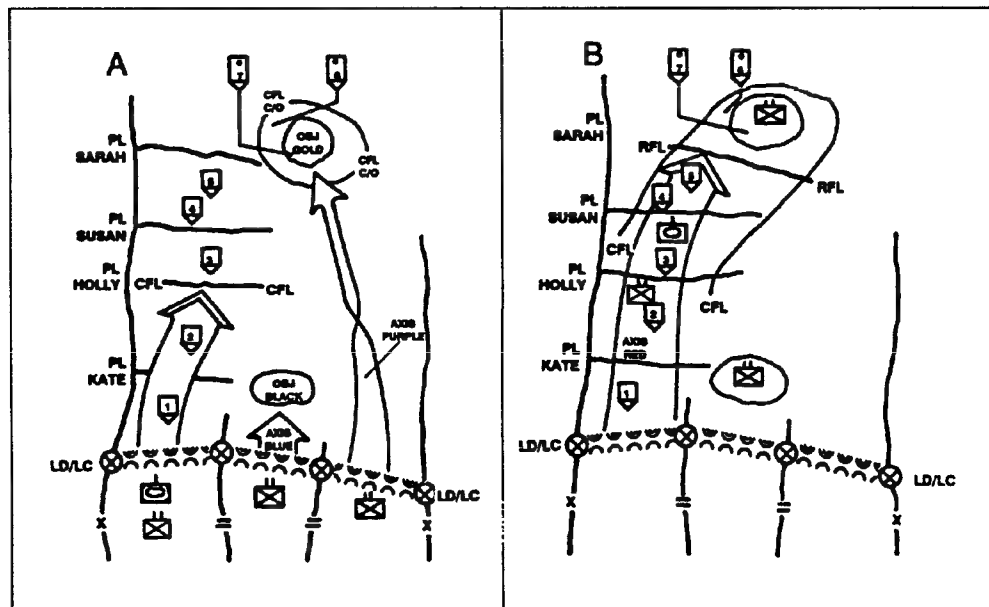


Figure 5-16. Light brigade/light armor company deliberate attack, example 2.

EXPLOITATION

Exploitation is a continuation of an attack to take advantage of and maximize success. It prevents the enemy from reconstituting an organized defense or conducting an orderly withdrawal. It normally follows a successful attack that weakens or collapses enemy defenses. The exploitation focuses on the enemy and destroys his will to resist. Speed is essential. Mobility of the exploiting force must be equal to or greater than the enemy force.

The light armor company normally participates in the exploitation as part of a much larger force. The exploitation is executed as a movement to contact or hasty attack. Exploiting force missions include securing objectives deep in the enemy rear, cutting LOC, surrounding and destroying enemy units, denying escape routes to an encircled force, and destroying enemy reserves.

The exploiting unit advances rapidly to the enemy rear area, destroying enemy combat units and lightly defended and undefended CS and CSS activities. Bypassed enemy forces are reported to higher headquarters for reduction by follow-and-support forces. The successful exploitation can turn into a pursuit, with the end goal being total destruction of the enemy's ability to fight.

PURSUIT

A pursuit normally follows a successful exploitation. The objective of a pursuit is to maintain pressure on the enemy and intercept, capture, or completely destroy him. Light infantry units conducting a pursuit should maximize the use of light armor assets to slow, disrupt, and confuse the enemy withdrawal. Again, the company would usually participate in a pursuit as part of a larger force in a movement to contact or hasty attack.

The pursuit is conducted using a direct pressure force, an encircling force, and a follow-and-support force. The light armor company may be part of these forces, which have the following functions:

- The direct pressure force denies enemy units the opportunity to rest, regroup, or resupply by staying in direct contact with them and forcing them to stay on the move. At every opportunity, the direct pressure force envelops, cuts off, and destroys enemy elements.
- The encircling force moves to get in the rear of the enemy and blocks his escape; in conjunction with the direct pressure force, it attacks to destroy the enemy force. It advances along routes parallel to the enemy's line of retreat to reach defiles, communication centers, bridges, and other key terrain ahead of the enemy main force.
- The follow-and-support force is not a reserve, but it is committed to destroy bypassed enemy units, relieve direct pressure force elements (which have halted to contain enemy forces), secure LOC, secure terrain, or guard prisoners at key installations.

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN BUILT-UP AREAS

Light armor units will not normally fight as a company within BUAs. However, the company may have sections or platoons task organized to infantry teams or TFs to provide direct FS for urban fighting (see [Chapter 4](#)). The phases of attacks of a BUA are also explained in [Chapter 4](#).

The fight for urban terrain begins outside the BUA. The light armor company can be used to isolate the area and provide direct FS for the assault force to gain a foothold.

The light armor company isolates the BUA by enveloping it and seizing key terrain that dominates approach and escape routes (see Figure 5-17). The isolation serves to prevent enemy reinforcement and/or contain the enemy within the BUA. The orientation of the light armor platoons is important. Companies and platoons may be required to orient M8s toward the BUA as well as outward along mounted avenues of approach (see Figure 5-18).

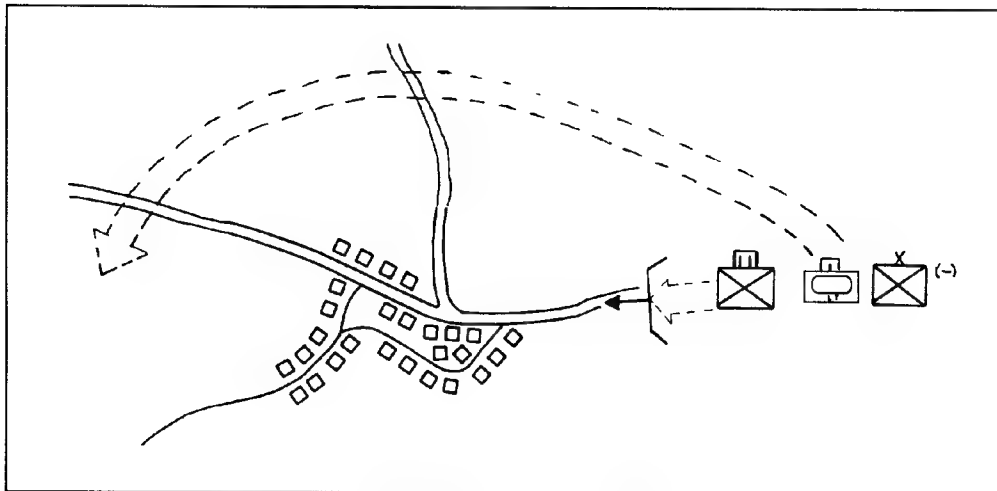


Figure 5-17. Light armor company enveloping a built-up area.

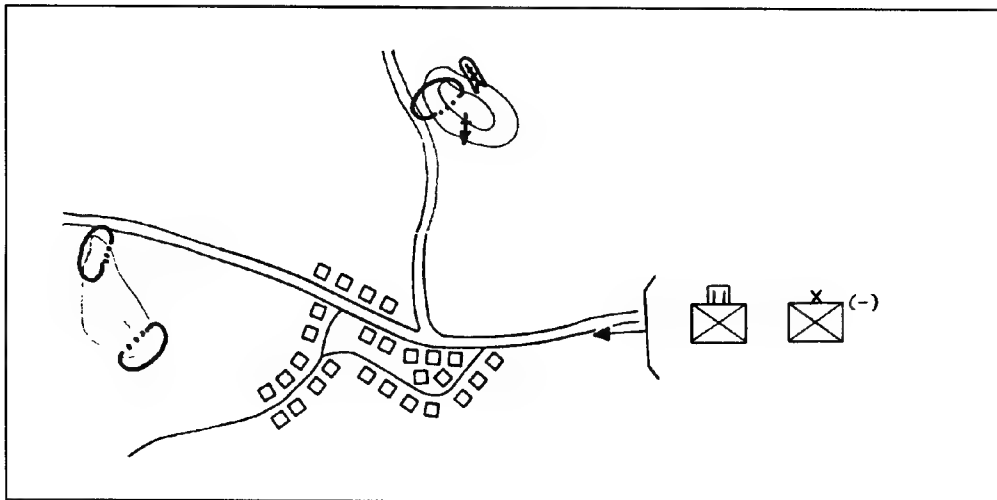


Figure 5-18. Blocking positions around a built-up area.

Light armor companies may be required to move in or through BUA when—

- There is no bypass.
- They are required to seize key positions during an exploitation or when the town is lightly or undefended.
- They are escorting a convoy through a BUA that presents little or no threat.
- There are two techniques for conducting a light armor attack in or through a BUA.

The light armor company can penetrate poorly defended or unalerted urban areas to occupy key objectives, holding them for a limited time. When the enemy defenses are weak or no organized enemy resistance is present, the lead armor unit can immediately attack. The force may not be predominantly infantry, but some infantry is required. The assaulting force drives directly to the center of the town, then proceeds to attack outward.

During exploitation, when surprise has been achieved or when tactical (or terrain) conditions make an enveloping attack difficult, it may be possible to secure the main route through the town by a sudden attack. The attack is made at top speed, with all weapons employed against any enemy personnel encountered. The move continues through the town to dominating terrain on the other side. As the attack continues, flank guards strike quickly up the side streets if necessary to protect the main body. Complete occupation of the town is left to follow-on infantry if needed. In this method, the lead M8 tank commander must be certain of his route and act boldly. If halted by antitank fire, he must notify the commander immediately to keep the following units from jamming up the streets behind him. He may request assistance, continue the assault, or reconnoiter for a bypass.

OTHER OFFENSIVE TASKS

The following discussion describes other tactical tasks that may be required of the light armor company during offensive operations.

Obstacle Breaching. During offensive operations, the light armor company may be required to assist the light infantry brigade in breaching obstacles. The brigade has limited engineer support that is capable of breaching simple obstacles. The light armor company plays a key part in isolating the breach point and providing direct fire support to the breach and assault forces.

When it encounters obstacles, the infantry TF will initially reconnoiter to find a bypass. If no bypass is found and the obstacle is not complex, the TF commander may attempt an in-stride breach. If the obstacle is complex, the brigade may require augmentation from corps engineers.

The unit will be organized into support, breach, and assault forces with the following functions:

- The support force should primarily consist of M8s to provide long-range direct fire suppression of enemy defensive positions.
- The breach force consists of the engineers and equipment necessary to clear a lane through the barrier. Infantry and, in some cases, light armor will accompany the breach force to provide close-in security and supporting fires. The breach force usually operates under obscurity to protect it from enemy observation. The breach force may be required to follow and support the assault force.
- The assault force attacks to destroy enemy forces defending the obstacle. Depending on the terrain and type of defense being assaulted, it should consist of infantry and light armor.

The breach operation is executed through suppression, obscuration, security, and reduction using all available infantry, armor, engineers, artillery, and mortars. The considerations in the following paragraphs apply.

Suppression. The support force suppresses enemy direct fire defenses. It must put direct fires on enemy positions and adjust indirect fires and smoke from artillery and mortars.

Obscuration. Use of smoke or naturally obscuring terrain is a must. Special engineer equipment, engineers, and infantrymen are extremely vulnerable during the breaching phase if the enemy cannot be destroyed, suppressed, or obscured. Obscuration can also hamper C2 during the breach. Training, preparation, and rehearsals can overcome these problems.

Security. In some instances, light infantrymen can secure the far side of the obstacle prior to full lane clearance through infiltration, bypass, air assault, or minor breach. Elements on the far side can help to secure the exit points of the breach lane as well as provide suppressive fire on the enemy.

Reduction. Reduction of the obstacle is the most complicated part of the assault breach. The support force shifts the obscuration and suppressive fires as the breaching force moves forward. Special engineer equipment that may be required includes ACEs, MICLICs, dozers, scoop loaders, and armored vehicle launched bridges (AVLBs).

Consolidation. Occupation of an objective is a critical task. Enemy forces on the objective must be eliminated or captured. The company must immediately prepare for a counterattack by the enemy. The company is most vulnerable and unorganized during consolidation, and the enemy will attempt to capitalize on this.

During consolidation the company commander should—

- Designate platoon positions and general orientations.
- Ensure the company occupies the position designated in the OPORD. M8s are moved to hull down positions, and the platoon leader assigns specific sectors of fire.
- Prepare for a counterattack.
- Establish security and mutual support between adjacent units.
- Eliminate any remaining pockets of enemy resistance and secure EPWs.
- Prepare to continue the mission.

Reorganization. Reorganization must also be conducted rapidly. Each platoon leader should report his casualties and ammunition, fuel, and vehicle status to the commander and XO. The XO or 1SG reports the status to the TF.

If the attack is to continue reorganization must be quick. The commander, XO, and 1SG should ensure that the following activities are accomplished during reorganization:

- Reassignment of crew members if losses were heavy. Survivors of damaged vehicles can replace casualties elsewhere.
- Cross-level ammunition, where necessary.
- As many repairs by the maintenance section as time allows.
- Evacuation of wounded soldiers.
- Evacuation of EPWs and intelligence information.
- Evacuation of bodies of soldiers KIA.

LIMITED VISIBILITY

Limited visibility attacks are preferred by the light infantry. They are also the most difficult to execute. They require detailed planning, preparation, and rehearsals. Movement will be slower, confusion more likely, and consolidation and reorganization more difficult.

Control of platoons is more difficult at night in limited visibility. Strict light and noise discipline is required. Control measures are more restrictive. The following are some control considerations that apply during company planning for limited visibility operations:

- Assembly areas may be smaller and closer to the LD. Standardize platoon/company movement into and out of assembly areas.
- Guides may be posted to assist movement to the LD and through the points of departure.
- Allow more time for movement and positioning of key weapon systems.
- Objectives and routes must be more clearly defined.
- Intermediate objectives may be necessary to maintain control and direction.
- Graphic control measures are usually more restrictive. For example, restrictive fire lines (RFLs), no-fire lines, and limits of advance (LOA) may be introduced to further control unit movement and fires.
- Illumination rounds timed to burn on the ground can mark objectives and keep the company oriented.
- Navigational aids and positioning systems greatly aid in unit movement.
- Thermal night vision capability gives the M8 the ability to see farther than the passive sights of the infantry.

One of the greatest dangers to a night attack comes from the risk of friendly fire. Some techniques to help reduce the risk of fratricide include—

- Improving gunner vehicle identification and thermal image identification skills.
- Coordinating laterally before and during the battle. Knowing where units on the left and right will be, as well as their formations and their exact routes. During movement, everyone must be informed of relative locations and any route changes or delays.
- Ensuring that subordinate leaders understand all aspects of the operation. Rehearse the plan over similar terrain, at night if possible. Conduct briefbacks with each key leader (including attachments).
- Tightening control measures, especially when units are to the front or in a known direction. Use weapons hold or weapons tight status (for example, weapons hold left).

Section V. Defensive Operations

This section describes the most common defensive missions conducted by the light armor company while operating with a light infantry brigade. Organized as a company team, the light armor company can conduct defensive combat operations—

- With its parent light armor battalion (see [Chapter 6](#)).
- Task organized to a light infantry brigade.
- Task organized to a light infantry battalion.

The light infantry conducts the following two forms of defenses:

- **Mobile defense.** The mobile defense uses a combination of offensive, defensive, and delaying actions. Brigades usually participate in mobile defenses when defending as part of a larger force. This type of defense requires mobility equal to or greater than that of the enemy; therefore, light infantry brigades use this form of defense when terrain is restrictive. All or a majority of the light armor company is kept as a reserve force during mobile defenses.
- **Area defense.** The area defense denies enemy access to specific terrain for a specific time. The bulk of the defending force is deployed to retain ground. The brigade uses a combination of defensive positions and small mobile reserves. Area defenses are usually used when depth is not possible. In that case, the light armor company usually has its platoons task organized to the infantry battalions. At least one of the platoons should be kept as the brigade reserve.

The light armor company can expect to perform one of many different missions as part of the overall brigade defensive plan. These missions can be as part of the security force or as main battle area, reserve force, or rear area actions. When planning for the use of light armor in the defense, the infantry commander should consider the following:

- **Mission.**
- **Enemy.** Light armor should be placed in defensive positions that capitalize on its long-range firepower and mobility advantages. Light armor may have to be concentrated when an enemy mounted threat exists. The company may have platoon(s) task organized to infantry battalions when a dismounted enemy threat exists.
- **Terrain.** Terrain affects three aspects of M8 positioning:
 - Protection (cover and concealment).
 - Firepower (observations and fields of fire).
 - Mobility (obstacles and avenues of approach).
 - Light armor should be massed when the terrain allows. In rolling, open terrain, the light armor company can defend in platoon BPs to overwatch mounted avenues of approach. In close terrain, further task organization of platoons to light infantry battalions may be necessary.
- **Troops available.** Employment of the light armor company may depend on the ability to provide infantry for security. When positioned in or moving through restrictive terrain, infantry is needed to assist in close security. Engineers are needed to prepare M8 fighting positions; employment and task organization may be dependent on the availability of engineer support for preparation of positions.
- **Time available.** Static defensive preparations for light armor are time-consuming. The time available may drive the decision to place light armor in BPs or in reserve.

Other planning considerations include the following:

- Determine where to kill the enemy.
- Determine positions for the M8s.
- Plan for security and limited visibility.
- Assign missions and graphic control measures.
- Determine the sequence and timing of fire and maneuver.
- Plan improvement of positions and routes.
- Incorporate a deception plan.
- Conduct lateral and higher headquarters coordination.

COMPANY DEFENSIVE FIRE PLANNING

The company defensive fire plan enables the company commander to distribute and control fires in support of the brigade commander's defensive concept. In turn, it assists the brigade commander in preparing his fire plan. If part of the brigade area is threatened, the commander can use the fire plan to determine which weapons can cover the threatened area. Using radio or SOP signals, he can then direct fires to destroy the threat. To develop a defensive fire plan, the commander must—

- Assign a location for vehicles and sectors of fire. A sector of fire is the area where an M8 has primary responsibility for acquiring and engaging the enemy. The sectors of fire should overlap between individual vehicles and with adjacent elements on the company's flanks, based on where he wants to kill the enemy.
- Designate limited visibility capable TRPs and indirect fire targets in the company sector. The FSO assigns numbers to the indirect fire targets.
- Coordinate with adjacent units.
- Evaluate information from his vehicle commanders to determine if they can effectively observe and engage targets and TRPs within their sectors. Each vehicle commander prepares a sketch card for each position. The platoon leader consolidates them, prepares his platoon sector sketch, and gives a copy to the commander.
- Develop a sketch of the company's sector, with a list of direct fire engagements and a legend, for all primary, alternate-and supplementary firing positions (see figure 5-19).

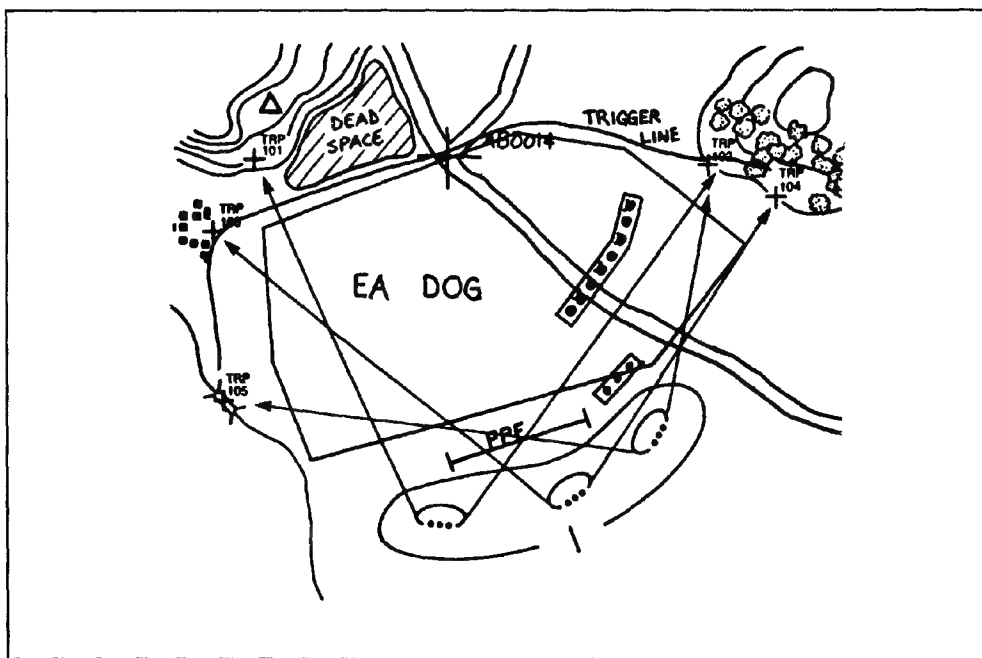


Figure 5-19. Company direct fire plan.

The sketch should include

- 'The company sector.
- Individual vehicle positions and platoon sectors.
- OPs.
- TRPs and EAs.
- Obstacles.
- Indirect fire targets.
- Dead space.
- The legend lists targets in the company's sector and M8s that can fire on those targets. It should also explain the direct fire and indirect fire graphics represented, as well as obstacles and barriers within the sector that can assist in the defense by canalizing the enemy into an EA. Standard military symbols are used to depict the obstacles and barriers, which should be covered by direct or indirect fire.
- Give a copy of the company fire plan to the light infantry company or TF commander as well as each of his M8 commanders.

DEFENSE OF A BATTLE POSITION

The light infantry brigade uses the light armor company in a BP to concentrate its fires, limit its maneuver, or place it in an advantageous position to counterattack. The light armor company defends from a BP in the same way as the tank company. This type of defense is used to control fires and movement. It is designed to concentrate direct fires at critical places and times to take advantage of available terrain. The light infantry brigade commander will assign the light armor company a BP that dominates a main battalion-size enemy armor (mounted) avenue of approach.

The brigade commander specifies critical tasks for companies defending BPs. A minimum level of preparation is assigned at each battle position (occupy, prepare, or reconnoiter) to enable the company to accomplish its mission. The company is required to orient its weapon systems on an enemy avenue of approach using TRPs or EAs. The light armor company defends in a BP to accomplish one or more of the following:

- Destroy an enemy force in an EA.
- Control key terrain by holding the BP.
- Block an avenue of approach.
- Fix the enemy force to allow another unit to maneuver.

When defending a BP, the company positions its elements and maneuvers freely within the limits of the position to accomplish the commander's intent. If the company commander needs to position elements outside the BP to make better use of terrain, increase dispersion, or maximize his firepower, he should coordinate these locations with his senior commander.

DEFEND IN SECTOR

The light infantry brigade uses a defense in sector to prevent an enemy force from passing the rear boundary of the sector. A defense in sector is used when—

- The enemy situation is vague.
- Multiple avenues of approach exist, precluding concentration of fires.
- Retention of terrain is not critical.
- Flexibility is desired.

When defending in sector, the brigade uses the depth of the sector to defeat the enemy within his boundaries while maintaining flank security and ensuring unity of effort. Sectors give the subordinate battalion TF commanders the freedom to decentralize fire planning. It allows the commanders to allocate his forces to suit the terrain and to plan in depth.

The light armor company will usually have platoons task organized to the forward defending infantry battalions, with at least one platoon (with infantry, TOWs, and/or other appropriate forces) retained as the brigade reserve under the command of the light armor company commander. Figure 5-20 shows an example of a brigade defense in sector with a supporting light armor company. This example shows three brigades (each with a light armor company team) defending in sector. The brigade on the left has one light armor platoon defending forward in sector with an infantry battalion and the remainder of the company in reserve. The middle brigade has all three platoons task organized to the battalions and the third brigade (on the right) employs the entire light armor company in a blocking position on a flank enemy mounted avenue of approach.

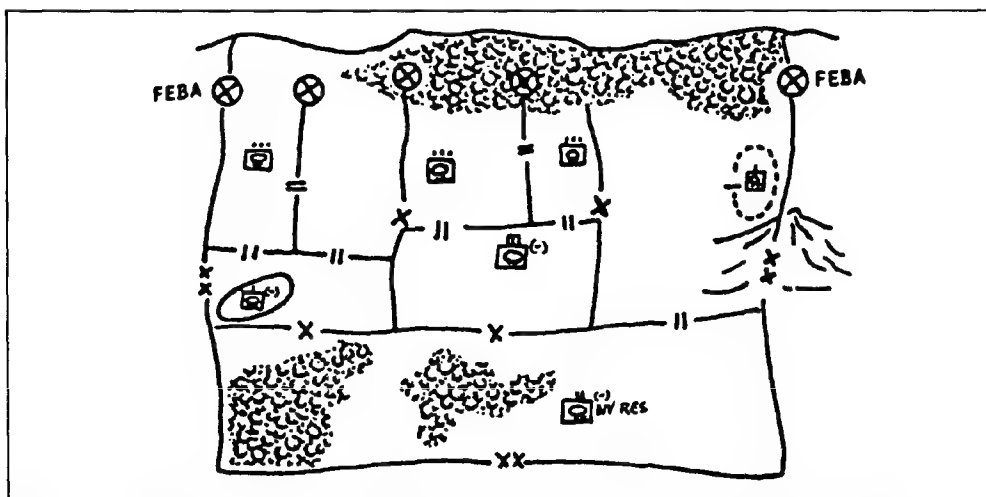


Figure 5-20. Light infantry brigade sectors showing examples of light armor company employment.

DEFENSE OF A STRONGPOINT

A strongpoint is a defensive position that is fortified as extensively as time and materials allow. It is used to hold key terrain critical for the defense, to provide a pivot for the maneuver of friendly forces, and to canalize the enemy into friendly EAs.

A strongpoint is attacked at the risk of high casualties. It cannot easily be overrun or bypassed. It is tied in with existing obstacles, forcing the enemy to reduce it by dismounted assaults and massive artillery and tactical air concentrations.

While the size and type of force selected to execute a strongpoint defense will vary according to the situation, an infantry-heavy unit is normally used, with light armor retained for mobility. The light armor company can counterattack an enemy force that is halted by the strongpoint defense. Figure 5-21 shows an example of how the light armor company can be used in a brigade defense when one of the battalions is defending a strongpoint.

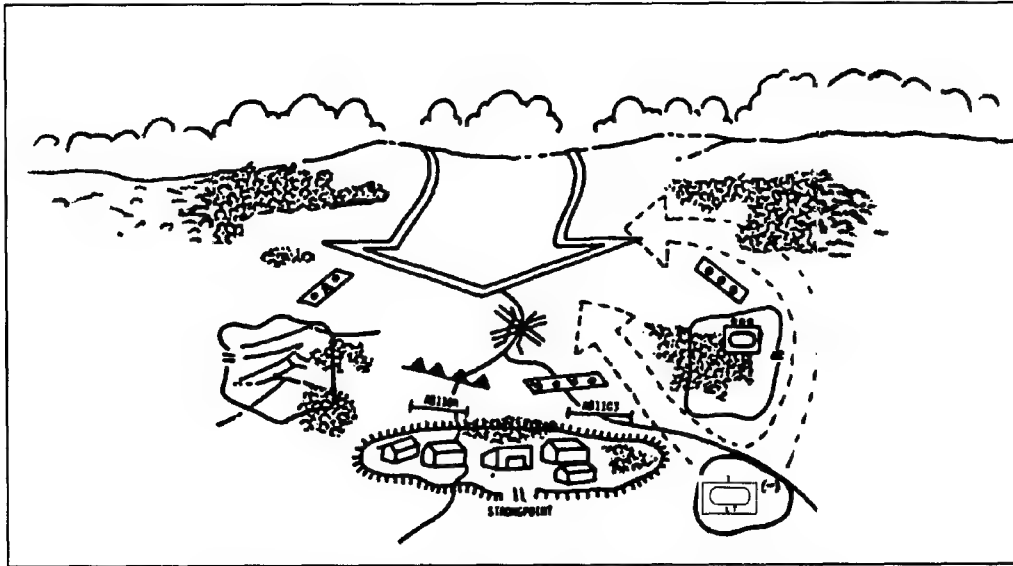


Figure 5-21. Light armor company supporting a strongpoint defense.

PERIMETER DEFENSE

A defense of a perimeter is conducted in the same manner as that of a battle position except the perimeter defense orients on 360 degrees. Perimeter defenses are used to protect the force, hold specific terrain, or protect a key installation from destruction. The brigade uses this defensive technique when it must hold critical terrain and is not tied in with adjacent units, often employing light infantry. Common situations for use of the perimeter defense include—

- Defense of assembly areas.
- Defense of specific positions or key terrain.
- When the unit has been bypassed or isolated by the enemy.
- When the unit is in an airhead or lodgement.

While a BP can allow some penetration, a perimeter cannot. Subordinate battalions are assigned to defend specific portions of the perimeter. Flanks of all units are tied in to provide mutual support. If the perimeter is penetrated, the reserve blocks the penetration or counterattacks to restore the perimeter. The brigade plans positions in depth.

Light armor supports the brigade by providing platoons to the battalions that have enemy mounted avenues of approach into their portion of the perimeter. The remainder of the light armor company can be retained as a reserve. [Figure 5-22](#) shows how a brigade can use a supporting light armor company in a perimeter defense.

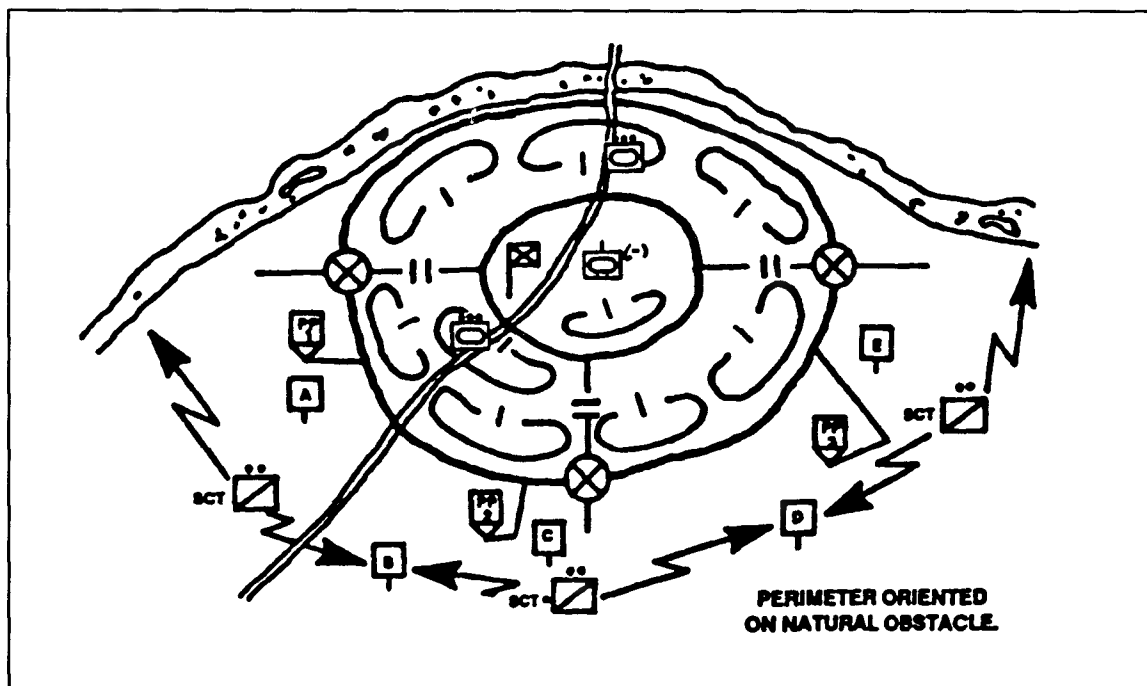


Figure 5-22. Light armor company supporting a perimeter defense.

LIGHT INFANTRY ANTIARMOR DEFENSE

This defensive technique is normally used against an enemy armor threat in restrictive terrain. It is characterized by decentralized execution of detailed antiarmor ambushes and obstacles. This technique prevents the attacker from focusing his full combat power at one point. Its purpose is to destroy enemy forces through a series of antiarmor ambushes. It can be used to—

- Deny the enemy the use of a trail or road network in an area of restrictive terrain.
- Deny a choke point to the enemy. Based on the situation, this may be a mountain pass, a bridge crossing, or a highway through wooded terrain.
- Defend against a motorized enemy force that is attempting a move through restrictive terrain.
- Force the enemy into an EA allowing the unit to mass fires.

This defense allows for planned penetration, ambushes, and counterattacks throughout the enemy formation. It is the most offensively oriented defensive technique that light infantry can employ. The brigade assigns sectors to the battalions. The commanders analyze their sectors and organize to make maximum use of dispersed small-unit tactics (down to squad level) to attack the enemy throughout the depth of his formations.

The primary focus of this technique is on the enemy force. Indirect fires and obstacles are tied into the tactical plan to slow and/or stop the enemy in the EA. An aggressive patrol plan is used to provide security, report information, and harass the enemy in an effort to confuse him as to the location of the main defense.

An example of a light armor company supporting a brigade antiarmor defense is in Figure 5-23. The light armor company can be task organized to support the battalion's sectors or retained as a reserve and counterattack force to react to penetrations or exploit success. Light armor is used—

- When a motorized enemy is going to attempt a move through restrictive terrain.
- To maintain a mobile reserve to exploit success.

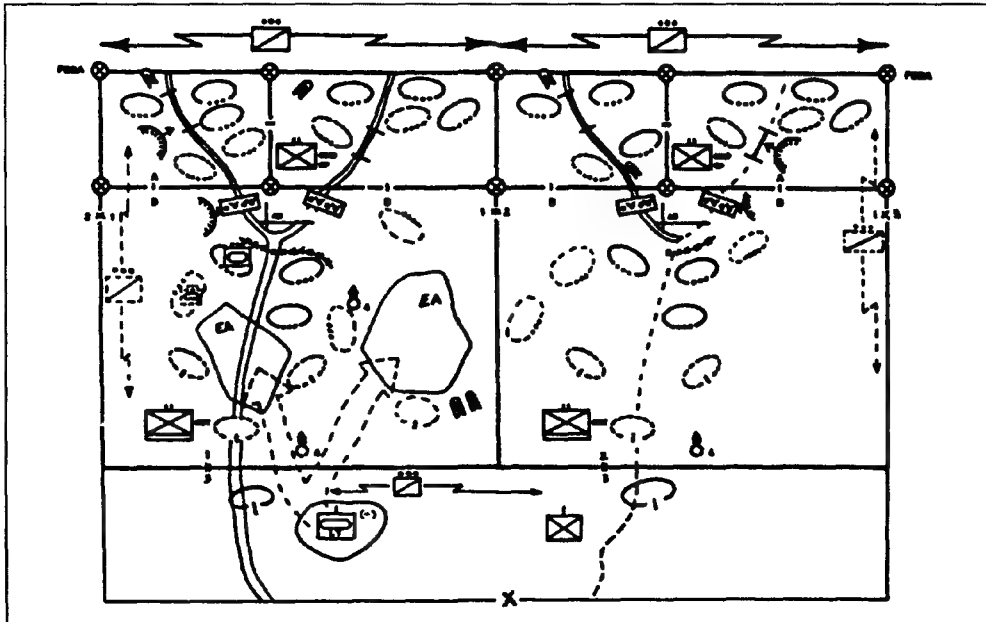


Figure 5-23. Light infantry brigade antiarmor defense.

DEFENDING BUILT-UP AREAS

Light infantry commanders should consider the following when integrating M8s into the urban defense plan:

- Avoid combat within BUAs when feasible.
- Use restrictive missions and detailed control measures to facilitate decentralized execution and prevent fratricide.
- Provide priorities and deadlines for the accomplishment of assigned tasks.
- Attach CS and CSS units to the lowest level possible.
- Employ the combined arms team to maximize individual unit capabilities.
- Include M8 fires in the obstacle plan and counterattack plan.

- Light armor leaders must be informed of patrol plans to prevent firing on friendly units. Extensive infantry patrolling is conducted to prevent enemy infiltration. Long- and short-range recognition signals should be incorporated into the security plan.
- Some M8s may be held in reserve to counterattack enemy attempts to envelop the town while others provide direct FS for the infantry defense.
- Use small BUAs as obstacles when they add significant advantage to the direct fire plan.
- If terrain permits, establish light armor defenses as far forward of a BUA as possible.
- Integrate adjacent terrain into the defense.
- Use M8s to assist security forces in limiting enemy ground reconnaissance and infiltration.
- Light armor leaders must know what passive resistance measures have been taken along the enemy's avenue of approach, such as removing route indicators and minefield markers and weakening of bridges and culverts. M8 commanders must also know these plans. Failure to know what passive measures have been taken may cause unnecessary mistakes and/or injury to M8 crewmen.

The utility of M8s in defensive street fighting is limited. Streets and alleys provide restricted fields of fire. Restricted observation and the proximity of friendly troops to enemy targets limit the use of armor fires. Normally, only security elements are left in the town proper. The defenses are usually concentrated on favorable ground around it. When the town occupies the dominating terrain in the vicinity, however, it may be organized as a key part of the BP or strongpoint.

When the town is organized as a defensive position, the light armor commanders select primary, alternate, and supplementary positions. Because observation in any BUA is greatly restricted, OPs should be set up and communications improvised between them and the M8s. The OPs should not be placed in steeples, prominent towers, or other obvious locations that the enemy is likely to suspect and take under fire.

Light armor units are employed as in the defense of an organized BP. A small, well-organized, determined force defending in a BUA can hold off a much larger attacker for longer periods of time. Strongly constructed cities give the defender a decided advantage. Each building or group of buildings is a potential strongpoint.

When reconnoitering for covered routes of advance and withdrawal, light armor unit commanders should not overlook the possibility of moving through ground floor lobbies and corridors of the larger buildings. This type of route requires careful marking, but has the advantage of being largely concealed from aerial observation. A careful reconnaissance, made with engineer assistance if possible, is necessary to determine whether the floors will support the M8s.

OTHER DEFENSIVE TASKS

Reserve Force. Early in the planning stage, the commander should make important decisions concerning the size, composition, and mission of the reserve. The primary purpose of the reserve is to retain flexibility, reinforce success, or regain the initiative. The light armor company must be able to accomplish one or more of the following subsequent missions:

- Counterattack.
- Reinforce a BP, sector, or strongpoint.
- Assume the mission of another unit.

When employed in a positional defense, such as perimeter defense or a BP, reserves can be used to conduct attacks against enemy penetrations by striking a decisive blow against an uncovered enemy flank. Additionally, should the enemy's attack fail, reserves could be used to reinforce success. When assigned the reserve mission, the light armor company—

- Occupies the reserve position (BP or assembly area).
- Reconnoiters the sector or BPs, concentrating on areas being considered for subsequent missions.
- Rehearses likely subsequent missions.
- Maintains the appropriate readiness condition to react promptly to on-order missions.
- Uses deception to reduce the enemy's ability to locate the M8s.

Counterattack Force. The company may participate in a counterattack to exploit an existing enemy weakness in the company's AO. An element counterattacks to—

- Destroy enemy units.
- Regain freedom of maneuver.
- Regain the initiative.
- Regain key terrain.
- Relieve pressure on an engaged unit.

A company executes two types of counterattacks:

- **Counterattack by fire.** A counterattack by fire is executed to complete the destruction of exposed enemy elements, to free decisively engaged elements, and to regain the initiative. The company executes a counterattack by fire by moving on a concealed route to a predetermined BP from which it can engage the enemy in the flank and/or rear while the remaining units hold their positions and continue to engage and maintain contact with the enemy (see Figure 5-24). When necessary, the company commander requests permission to maneuver outside the boundaries of the predetermined BP; he accomplishes this through prior planning, coordination with the commander, or an immediate request. If this maneuver influences another unit's mission, the company commander is responsible for coordination with that unit.

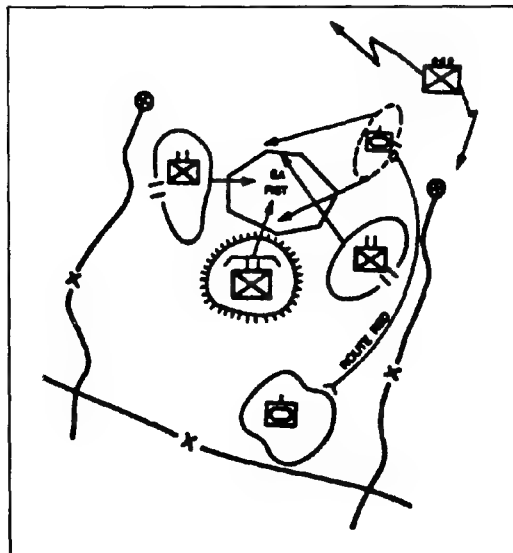


Figure 5-24. Counterattack by fire.

- **Counterattack by fire and maneuver.** A company normally conducts a counterattack by fire and maneuver to destroy the remaining enemy completely, to relieve pressure on a friendly unit, or to regain key terrain. The counterattack force attacks the enemy from the flank whenever possible, using fire and movement to overwhelm and destroy him.

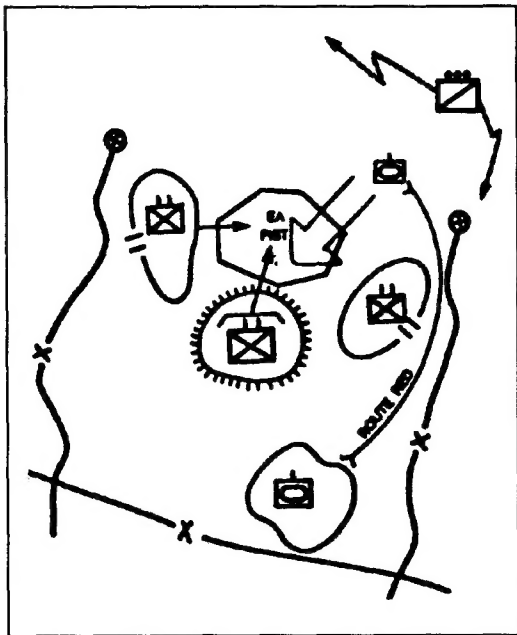


Figure 5-25. Counterattack by fire and movement.

The company conducts the counterattack by fire and movement in a manner similar to a hasty attack (see Figure 5-25).

LIMITED VISIBILITY

Light armor companies can expect to conduct defensive missions in limited visibility while supporting light infantry. The enemy will attempt to take advantage of the conditions to bypass or get close to defensive positions without being detected. The fundamentals of defensive operations do not change. Light infantry units will take special measures during limited visibility, such as increasing the number of patrols between positions. Depending on the situation, commanders can use the following techniques during limited visibility:

- Use M8 thermal sights for detection on defined avenues of approach. Integrate their use into the company fire plan.
- Reposition weapons to concentrate on the avenues of approach that the enemy is likely to use during limited visibility.
- Plan and rehearse required movement of units and massing of fires.
- Plan to reposition weapons to compensate for the disparity between day and night acquisition ranges.
- Reconnoiter the limited visibility positions, mark them, and mark the routes to them.
- Strengthen security with additional OPs and turret personnel.
- Enforce noise and light discipline.

Section VI. Other Operations

LODGEMENTS

The light armor company will perform the same functions as the platoon during lodgement seizure and expansion. See [Chapter 4](#) for more details. The advantage of the light armor company in the lodgement is that one or two platoons can be placed forward with infantry to block mounted avenues of approach while at least one platoon is maintained as a reserve.

RETROGRADE OPERATIONS

Three types of retrograde missions are assigned to the light armor company: delay, withdrawal, and retirement.

Delay. The purpose of delay is to slow the enemy by trading terrain for time while inflicting maximum damage. Enemy forces are delayed by the effective use of obstacles, firepower, and terrain. Delaying forces avoid decisive engagement.

The light armor company can conduct a delay alone or as part of a larger unit. The considerations of planning and executing a delay at company level are the same as described in [Chapter 4](#).

There are two types of delays:

- Delay in sector. This mission allows the most freedom to use the terrain as you see fit. There is usually no requirement to hold key terrain when conducting this type of delay.
- Delay forward of a line. This is a high-risk mission that requires preventing enemy forces from reaching a specified area earlier than the specified time or event, regardless of the cost. The commander will normally limit the maneuver from BP to BP or will restrict crossing a particular PL based on a specific time or event.

The two basic methods of conducting delays at the company level are described in the following paragraphs:

- From successive positions or PLs. This method is used when the mission requires covering a wide sector or avenue that is open and difficult to cover with light infantry. All or most of the light armor company must be deployed forward to cover the area. This method is also used when terrain does not allow for depth. As the fight progresses, the company fights from PL to PL. The platoons disengage separately from one PL or BP to the next while the remaining platoons provide overwatch (see Figure 5-26). In some cases, the enemy may force the company to disengage simultaneously. Bounding within the platoons may be necessary when the terrain restricts the platoons' ability to provide overwatch for one another.
- From alternate positions. When the AO is deep and narrow enough to be covered by one or two platoons, more depth and security can be achieved by delaying from alternate positions (see [Figure 5-27](#) on page 5-36). This maneuver does not normally allow all of the platoons to place fire on the enemy at one time. It is more difficult to control because platoons are moving and fighting simultaneously. The platoons have more time to establish their next positions, however, because other platoons are fighting and providing security.

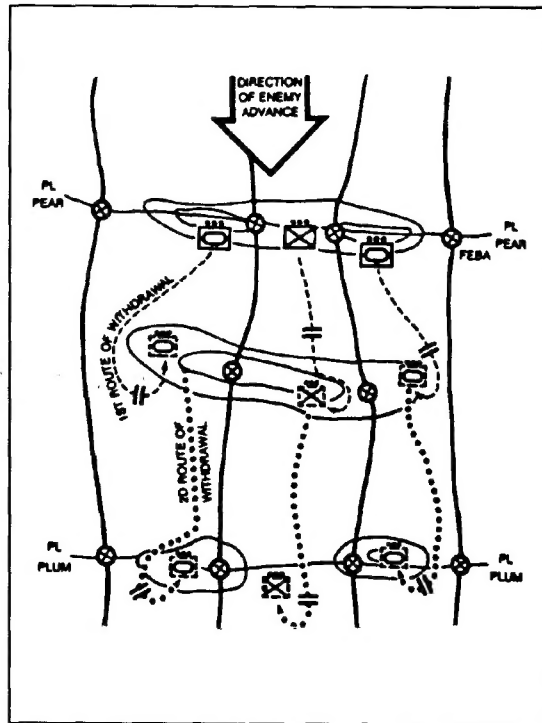


Figure 5-26. Delay from successive positions.

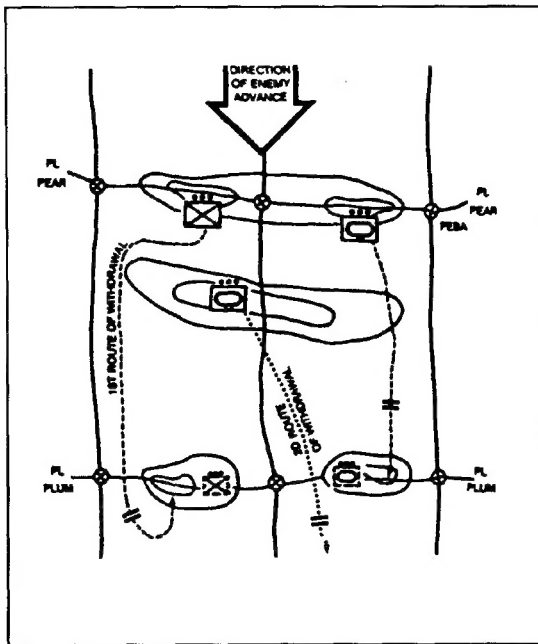


Figure 5-27. Delay from alternate positions.

Withdrawal. The purpose of a withdrawal is to disengage from the enemy. To successfully conduct a withdrawal, light forces need mobility equal to or greater than that of the enemy. There are two types of withdrawals:

- A withdrawal under enemy pressure requires the unit to maneuver to break contact when it is under attack from the enemy. A unit conducting a withdrawal under enemy pressure is organized into a security force and a main body. The withdrawal should always be conducted with the goal of avoiding discovery. Timing is critical. The unit must disengage by using massed fires and redeploy before the enemy can react to its movement.
- Withdrawal not under enemy pressure requires deception and speed. The unit is not under attack and does not expect to be attacked during the withdrawal. During the withdrawal, deception and OPSEC are stressed. A unit conducting this kind of withdrawal from a defensive position is organized into a main body and a DLIC.

The withdrawal plan must be modified to fit the technique used to defend or delay. Defense or delay techniques that are fluid and use a series of ambushes and raids to accomplish the mission can be used with withdrawal techniques associated with those operations. Defenses or delays that are more static require different withdrawal techniques. The techniques used for a light armor company to support the infantry brigade withdrawal are similar to the way the light armor platoon supports the infantry battalion withdrawal as described in [Chapter 4](#). The withdrawal requires the force to designate a DLIC, security force, and quartering parties, which are described below:

Detachment left in contact. The size, makeup, and mission of the DLIC are directed by the brigade commander. He will also name the DLIC commander. This is normally the XO. DLIC composition is dependent on the terrain and enemy situation. Although one could be the DLIC, each battalion normally will leave a company as its part of the brigade DLIC. This DLIC must be a mobile force. The light armor company with HMMWV TOWs (configured with machine guns) can provide the mobility needed to cover the withdrawal of the brigade main body.

Security force. The security force conceals the withdrawal of the main body and deceives the enemy by continuing the normal operational patterns of the battalion. If the enemy attacks during the withdrawal, the security force covers the withdrawal with fires. Priority of artillery and mortar fires is given to the security force. Once the battalion has reached its next position or a designated distance from the old position, the commander withdraws the security force. If it is under attack, the security force may have to maneuver to the rear until contact is broken.

- **Quartering party.** Each battalion sends a quartering party to the next position before the withdrawal starts. As their units arrive at the new location, members of the quartering party act as guides to lead elements into their new positions.

Retirement. Retirement is an operation where a force not in contact moves away from the enemy to avoid combat under unfavorable conditions. A withdrawal from action becomes a retirement after the main force has disengaged from the enemy and march columns have been formed. A retirement may be made to increase the distance between the defender and the enemy, to occupy more favorable terrain, to reduce the distance between maneuver and CSS elements, to conform to the disposition of a higher command, or to permit employment of a unit in another sector.

Planning considerations for a retirement are similar to those for delay and withdrawal. Movement during reduced visibility is preferred. The light armor company may be required to move on one or more routes to support the brigade.

The M8s can provide the appropriate forward, flank, and rear security. When contact with the enemy is possible, such as when a withdrawal has preceded retirement, a strong rear security is normally employed. If the enemy attacks the rear, delay tactics are used by the rear guard to extend the distance between the main body and the enemy. The keys to a successful retirement are dispersion, speed, and security.

CONVOY SECURITY

Light armor is well suited to provide the mobile, protected firepower to deter attacks on convoys. Convoy security is described in more detail in [Chapter 4](#). The same planning considerations apply at the company level.

The size of the force allocated to provide convoy security is driven by METT-T. The TF commander may decide to task organize a combined arms team to secure convoys, or a light armor company may be tasked to provide convoy security. The light armor company commander may act as the convoy security commander.